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LETTER

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

The EARL of HILLSBOROUGH, &c.

Dec
1770

and the author of the



and the author of the

Type-Table of Histriognathus, &c.

Recommended to the Perusal of every
FRIEND to IRELAND.

K. Will (W.) May of Downshire

LETTER

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

The Earl of HILLSBOROUGH,

Secretary of State for the Southern Department,

ON THE

Present State of Affairs in IRELAND.

AND AN

Address to the People of that Kingdom.

"H γάρ οἵοις ἄνδρα χολωσέμεν, ὃς μέγα πάντων

"Ἄργειν κρατέει, καὶ οἱ πείθονται Ἀχαιοί.

HOM. IL. Lib. I.

"A Spirit of Vigour was infused into the Multitude, and
"every Man became a Soldier, on the noblest Principles!"

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M, DCC, LXXX.



A

LETTER

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

The Earl of HILLSBOROUGH, &c.

London, Dec. 1, 1779.

MY LORD,

BELIEVE me it is not my business to pay your Lordship any personal compliments: you must excuse me, if, in pointing out the peculiar happiness of your late appointment (at the present juncture), I derive my reasons from your situation, not your character—the latter I am unacquainted with, but you have now an opportunity of displaying it to the advantage, not only of yourself, but of the empire to which you are become a minister.

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But,

But, my Lord, I am now principally to congratulate this country, that they have, at the head of a considerable department of the state, a man whose fortune sets him above dependence, whose rank is already such as ought to gratify the ambition of any subject, yet has been uniformly and officially instrumental in every erroneous and unconstitutional measure, pursued with respect to America. I believe, my Lord, you do not belong to any of those parties that go by the name of a particular nobleman; and I am convinced you enjoy as much personal weight and importance as this constitution can or ought to afford to any individual. But of the many advantages which your Lordship possesses, that which principally intitles you to this address, is your connexion with our sister kingdom. The great possessions you enjoy, the high rank you fill, and the personal respect which ought to await you in

in that country, call upon you, by the voice as well of interest as of honour, not to betray—not to neglect the cause of Ireland.—America, had she not been supported by the noblest exertions, as well of private virtue as of public spirit, must long since have fallen a prey to the oppressive measures you pursued against her; measures of so unjust, of so imprudent a nature, as could never have received the sanction of royal approbation, had she not been destitute of a friend in the ministerial body, who, despising the frown of a particular man or a particular party, would venture to address his Sovereign in the language of truth, and boldly assure him, “ That his colonies, firmly attached to his royal person and family, would ever dutifully submit to his lawful authority—but that the constitution which they had derived from their parent country, and of which his Majesty composed so material a branch,

was also an object of their most devoted affection ; That this constitution they would endeavour to maintain at the highest price, and that an invasion of it, even by the crown itself—(much more by a power unconnected with their interests, to whom their independence could add no dignity, who had a manifest advantage in their oppression), would be attended with every resistance that the generous spirit of Liberty could inspire ; That the people were brave and virtuous, endued with all the advantages of mental ability and corporal hardihood in as eminent a degree as any of his European subjects ; That each preferred the general welfare of his country to his own private ease and security, and that property, peace, and life itself, were light in the scale of Liberty and Public Spirit ; That they were not infected by the factious humour of this country, and that a corrupt parliament
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in England was not an argument of universal corruption." — On the contrary, what has been the continual burthen of ministerial argument — a Rhapsody of Abuse and illiberal Defamation — Cowardice — Faction — Weakness — Stupidity — Mob — Dissention — Private Interest! — such were the features by which they distinguished America! They, to a man, asserted the certainty of their immediate subjugation, and no less terms were insisted on than unconditional submission.

When the several Governors returned from their revolted Provinces, they were applied to for their opinion with regard to the strength, consistency, and respectability of the enemy; and their answers, compared with the event, will remain a lasting memorial of the power of court-influence over truth and honour—They affirmed, " That nine parts in

in ten of the inhabitants of America secretly favoured the claims of this country—That the councils and resolutions of the Congress were neither attended with dignity within doors, nor respect without—That their Legislature was composed of the most insignificant of the people; whilst those, whose character or fortune rendered them objects of respect and consideration, kept at a distance from the noise and tumult of faction, and, waiting only till the ferments of the mob should subside, would shortly throw themselves at our feet, and solicit pardon for their past resistance, with every assurance of their future submission—That, as their country afforded them not the necessaries of life, they must look for them only in our bounty—and That all those, who, either in the congress or the field, had taken an active part, were men of desperate fortunes, destitute as well

well of private as of public reputation."

—In short, they assented to every calumny invented by their Master, and plunged their country into the most horrid of all wars.

I am not clear, whether the promise of governing "with justice in mercy" does not preclude the use of arms in the exertion of royal authority—but certain I am, that, when first this Constitution delivered the sword into the hands of the Sovereign, the intention was that he should use it for the repulsion of foreign violence, not the disturbing domestic tranquillity—However, as the Parliament of Great-Britain have given their assent to all these acts of oppression, and as they, and their constituents, are in the end likely to become the principal sufferers, I have only to congratulate them on the success of their projects, and to remind them that they have now

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an opportunity of severing another wreath from the crown of their Sovereign.

My Lord, before I finish this long digression, permit me to ask the Minister one question—Does he still hope to subdue America? Or, how is it consistent with the virtues of the royal bosom to carry desolation where he could not impose slavery; and, in the wild despair of disappointed revenge, to ravage with fire and famine that country which his valour has not been able to subdue?

But to return—The people of Ireland, alarmed as they have justly been with apprehensions that those chains forged for America were also the models of fetters for themselves—though, indeed, the encroachments of the British Legislature had left but little room for any farther usurpations—yet, as internal taxation beyond the Atlantic had been an object with them,

them, why might not the same spirit of
peculation extend itself to Ireland?—
Alarmed, I say, my Lord, with those ap-
prehensions, a universal panic pervaded
the nation, lest the only remaining bul-
wark of their liberties was shortly to be
levelled, and that a despotic authority was
to preside over every branch of their civil
polity—They looked round them in the
despair of poverty and oppression for some
one object of comfort, but in vain—they
enumerated every species of national cala-
mity in the catalogue of their woes—an
encreasing debt—decreasing commerce—
heavy taxes—useless pensions!—while, to
gratify the rapacity of English contractors,
the only branch of trade they thought
themselves secure in, was confined by il-
legal restrictions (illegal, even according
to the parliamentary codes of English ju-
risprudence), and the most valuable pro-
duce of their country lay rotting in their
harbours

harbours*—their unguarded coasts were hourly insulted by a triumphant enemy, and (though conquest to them could have brought no advantage, but, on the contrary, would add strength to the hand that oppressed them) they felt themselves a prey to the calamities of war. In this dreadful situation they had recourse to arms for their defence against the common enemy. A spirit of vigour was infused into the multitude, and every man became a soldier on the noblest principles ; a repeller of injury, not an assailant ; a protector of his own country, not an invader of others : their swords were drawn, not

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* *An embargo has continued for “these three years on all provisions in Ireland, without any other sanction than that of Royal proclamation—The consequence has been frequent bankruptcies in that country—many princely fortunes acquired in this, by contractors and ministerial jobbers.”*

to gratify royal or ministerial ambition, but to defend all that can be dear to freemen, their persons, their families, and their homes !

To men in arms, and feeling themselves their own protectors, it naturally occurred that their importance was greater than it had hitherto been considered. They recollect that a foreign Legislature had assumed over them a power of restriction—a power derived from no one principle but that odious one of force ; that, in answer to every objection against this oppressive controlment, it had been answered, “ That obedience and gratitude were the necessary returns of protection and support ; and that England had a right to tyrannize over Ireland, as long as she defended her from the tyranny of others.”

This argument, futile in reason, is now become false in fact. England is no longer able to support Ireland ; she is

no longer able to defend herself—her multiplied acts of injustice have united the world against her; and Ireland may indeed be crushed in her ruin, but cannot look to her for protection. The members of the Irish legislature, perhaps less refined, but more virtuous, and consequently less corrupt than those of England, have not shut their eyes to the solemn conviction of facts. They have made known their sentiments to their Sovereign, and have required his assistance to do themselves justice—and, lest the same listless security which has hitherto pervaded his councils, and tarnished the dignity of his crown, should continue to operate, they have attempted to rouse him from his lethargy, and to effect, by firmness and resolution, what the justice of their cause and their distressed situation have been as yet too weak for. They have observed that nothing but vigour and unanimity had power to relieve America; that the Scotch, (the most favoured subjects

jects of the empire,) had ever approached the throne with a petition in one hand, a sword in the other; that with one eye they have expressed respect and duty, while the other squinted menace and defiance; and that even his injustice to themselves had proceeded from his dread of discontents in Britain—As therefore it was necessary to relieve the royal mind from every ignoble prejudice, they have undertaken to poise the last-mentioned unworthy motives by others equally strong and equally well-founded, and by that means to leave, for justice and equity, a candid and impartial decision.—

But, my Lord, though a cause of innocence and justice supported with ardour and ability has every reason to expect success, yet are they unwilling (if not forced by necessity) to rush into blood—they would gladly receive from the humanity of their Sovereign, what, if refused,

fused, they must *force* from his weakness ; and they wish that their redress may proceed from the policy and justice of the British Parliament rather than their own prowess and courage. They desire not a *rupture*, but demand an *equality* with England. They know no laws but what they find in their own records, nor will they suffer any authority to say to them, “ Your Island is ours : we permit you to occupy it under these restrictions ; you shall have the shell, reserve the kernel for your masters—We have not deprived you of your personal freedom---your personal freedom is therefore the gift of our bounty. We have not encroached upon the produce of your harvest ; you are therefore to thank us for the bread you eat. And as it has not pleased us in the fullness of our omnipotence to massacre and destroy you, to us, and us alone, you are indebted for your existence.”

Such,

Such, my Lord, (very little disguised,) has been the language of this country to Ireland---and, if such it continues to be, we have a gloomy prospect before us--- The horrors of war, removed beyond the ocean, have been but lightly felt ; the groans of the wounded soldier have been faintly heard ; the soft complaints of the orphan daughter have scarce vibrated in our ears ; and the rude storm of the boisterous Atlantic has dispersed the shrill and piteous lamentations of the childless mother and the widowed wife---but, alas ! my Lord, kindle the torch of civil discord in Ireland, and the flames shall extend even to your capital !—A day will waft an army across the Channel ; a day will bring back the history of a battle ! What family shall not weep the event ? What parent shall not bewail a beloved son ? The tender maiden shall ponder in silent anxiety over the future fate of her betrothed lover : and the bosom of

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the matron shall throb with the severest alarms for the safety of a beloved husband. A similarity of manners, a long intercourse of friendship and esteem, nor even consanguinity and near alliance shall impede the progress of destruction ; and private animosity, joined to public fury, will but swell the torrent of universal despair. In vain shall the impatient merchant expect the return of his care and industry ! In vain shall the husbandman look for the rewards of his labour ! The plundered caravan, and ravaged field, shall present themselves in all the gloom of aggravated ruin ; and none, but the breast indurated by frequent scenes of blood, and callous to all the feelings of nature, shall prefer the greatest advantages gained through such accumulated misery, to peaceful poverty on the one hand, or acquiescence (even inglorious) on the other.

To you, my Lord,—(one of the links which unite those kingdoms,)—we all look

look up for peace and happiness. In either country you have much to lose ; to either country you have every motive of attachment. No ministerial reward can indemnify you in the loss of Ireland ; and, surely, no consideration can recompence you in the loss of honour. Your Sovereign has admitted you to his councils ; he has entrusted you with an important office—you are become a member of that cabinet which is to conduct us through that labyrinth in which we are involved. You will have an opportunity of informing his Majesty, what his other Ministers have hitherto concealed—“ That restriction from a foreign power is injustice—That government without representation is tyranny.” You may also inform him,—“ That the Irish, though fond of peace, are yet animated by freedom ; though full of loyalty, yet they expect justice—That it is not the murmur of a mob or a faction,

which has conveyed their complaints to his royal ears, but the deliberate voice of their supreme Legislature—That their troops are not an inconsiderable band of rioters, contemptible in numbers and in discipline, drawn together by a spirit of innovation, in hopes to raise their own private fortunes on the wrecks of the publick, and whom discord and faction will soon disunite—but a firm association of noblemen and the most respectable citizens, bound together by the ties of friendship and of interest, and enflamed with the generous enthusiasm of liberty——That there is not a man amongst them who would not willingly lay down his life in the cause, if by that means he could secure peace and relief to his country—and That, if they cannot live free, they will sell their lives and their liberties together.”

If the situation of public affairs has not yet opened his Majesty's eyes, you may

may easily find arguments to prove,—That his strength is by no means adequate to his purposes—That, however the corruption and venality of a British Parliament may have armed him here with an authority nearly absolute—that, however they may concur in his wish to reduce all their fellow-subjects to the same state of servility and degradation, they have thought proper themselves to rank in—yet, even the power of the British Parliament (rashly styled omnipotent) is not a match for that spirit of independence which has pervaded the empire—That the Irish (taught by every reasonable rule of jurisprudence, that the people, or their delegates, are the only legislators whom Nature directs them to obey—conscious that the only just object of law is the benefit of the people governed; and feeling, from severe experience, that the laws imposed on them by England are such as they never could have assented to,

and have tended to their oppression, not their advantage) can no longer resist the clearest evidence of reason, but join in an universal clamour against what they know to be a violation of their natural rights—what they feel an abridgement of their political welfare—That, if the argument of superior force has given to England a just claim over Ireland, it is now time to review that argument, and discover whether it still exists. If England has retained her superiority, no doubt she will retain her claim: if, on the contrary, she has lost it, it is but just that the effect should cease with the cause.”

If your Lordship shall find, that arguments drawn from the justice and necessity of the case are not attended with conviction, you may then address yourself to the royal passions. Ambition is often in monarchs the most powerful; and here it may operate with its utmost strength.

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It will require no great force of reason to prove, that to reign over two independent kingdoms is a situation of more dignity than to govern but one ; and that, if Ireland loses her political consequence, her King must also share in her degradation ; while, on the contrary, should England still continue to domineer over Ireland, yet will he continue to enjoy but his single negative.

Again, my Lord—but reserve it for the last resort. If the passion of Fear, as some will insinuate, has really found a passage into the royal mind, you may plant its whole artillery against any opposite argument. His Majesty, in reading the history of this country, must have observed the fluctuating nature of all sub-lunary establishments ; that Fortune to-day scatters sceptres and coronets, to-morrow chains and axes ; that this hour she clothes her slave in purple, the next

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she refuses a garment ; that England has long been the seat of faction, and that to faction, in some measure, he owes his present exaltation ; that what has happened may easily happen again ; and that it is not impossible but he or his posterity may one day lose the affections of his English subjects. If Ireland, at that time, should only be a province of this country, in vain will he seek there for protection : their duty to their masters, and the memory of former injuries, will both conspire against the unfortunate wanderer. Will he then be secure of an asylum in his native dominions ? The lot of his unfortunate ancestor, the Elector Palatine, may meet him even in Germany.—'Tis true, my Lord, human prudence will never be able to give stability and firmness to this inconstant goddess ; but she may render her mutability less ruinous—she may, in some degree, elude her persecutions. The merchant will not

not venture all his treasure in one bottom ; and it will be unwise in the King of England and Ireland, to rest all his authority on the crown of the former.

I flatter myself, my Lord, that some one of those reasons will have weight with his Majesty. If I am deceived, you will at least, in offering them, have acquired the reputation of a sincere courtier and an upright minister. Your certain reward will be the thanks of your country ; and the worst that can befall you is the displeasure of men whose favour will be a disgrace, not an honour.

My Lord, I am now to take my leave of your Lordship for some time. I shall, however, attend your political course through the ensuing session. If your conduct shall deserve well of your country, I shall not be a niggard of my applause : but if, on the contrary, you shall prefer

prefer the smile of a —, or a minister, to the duty you owe yourself and your fellow-subjects, you shall feel the utmost rigour of my resentment—I shall strain every nerve of my abilities to hold up to public contempt that character which I consider the most worthless—the pensioner, the pander, and the slave of unlawful authority !

I am, &c.

A S H O R T
A D D R E S S
TO THE
P E O P L E
O F
I R E L A N D.

SIC VOS NON VOBIS.



A S H O R T
A D D R E S S
TO THE
P E O P L E
O F
I R E L A N D.

London.

Friends and Fellow-Subjects,

TH E popular alarm that has been rung on your side the Channel has filled this kingdom with apprehensions equally serious and well founded.— Men, judging of the future by the past, are terrified lest a continuance of the same confined system of Scottish policy, which has occasioned the solemnity of your present parliamentary requisition, may, by preventing

preventing its effect, induce an appeal to that authority, which (deriving not its force from records or parchments) conducts us through the labyrinths of doubt and perplexity, to that state either of exaltation or depression which Providence has provided for us.—We are all convinced by fatal experience, how dangerous it is to rouse the indignation of a generous people!—how weak is that government which has not its basis in the affections of the subject? But still, tho' I confess the conduct, which has been hitherto pursued towards you, gives ample room for every unfavourable surmise, yet I have strong hopes that the eyes of his Majesty are at length opened, and that he has already sacrificed enough to his auspicious predilection for that selfish people—and, I flatter myself, that the use of arms in the government of a free nation is now exploded—nor will the King of Ireland assist a foreign power in their unlawful

lawful attempts to subdue his dutiful and loyal subjects.

It is an observation of every traveller and historian, " That the kingdom of Ireland is blessed with a fertile soil, temperature of climate, an abundance of every necessary provision, and, together with every other requisite towards an extensive commerce, a greater number of commodious harbours than any other country of its extent in Europe—and yet (they conclude) their people are poor and miserable, their garments squalid and filthy, and their habitation more adapted for the shelter of their cattle than the residence of the human species."—This account must appear a strange paradox to any person unacquainted with your country; but to you the solution is obvious and easy— You have traced the effect, and find it to proceed from a cause which has an existence with regard to you alone of all the nations

nations under heaven—the despotic and arbitrary tyranny of a government whose interest it is to make you poor—who absolutely are gainers by your loss. This authority, on examination, you have discovered to be founded in no one principle of justice, and diametrically opposite to that grand, invariable rule of natural jurisprudence, “ That the intention of government is the advantage of the subject, not the aggrandizement of the governor.” Add yet, though your motives of resentment have been great and multiplied, you have applied to your lawful Sovereign (who, indeed, has too long taken part, with your adversaries, in your oppression) with all the duty and submission of loyal subjects ; and, laying before him the cause of your complaint, you have requested him to relieve you of your grievous burthen : and, lest he should, from apprehensions of his own weakness, be induced to neglect your cause, you have shewn yourselves

selves ready to co-operate in any endeavours he may think it necessary to make for your advantage, “ *with every means which God and Nature have put into your hands.*”

It is but natural that your present conduct should give rise to many and various opinions ; that you should become, in a great degree, the subjects of argument in this country ; and that, while some brand you with the stigma of rebellion and treachery, others are inclined to give you every praise that awaits the hero and the patriot. By one party it is alleged, that your demand at the present crisis is a breach of every rule of honour ; and they give the opprobrious term of cowardice to the advantage you have taken over England at this period of her weakness and humiliation. On the contrary, it is argued, that the original claim of this country over yours was derived from your imbecility ; and that, as the first aggressor,

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she has invited retaliation.—Some aver, that Ireland, by her own act, has made herself liable to the laws imposed by this Legislature; while others, who happen to have read your history, as positively deny the fact.—Many pretend to construe your long submission to her control a tacit acknowledgment of your consent; while others contend that this has been a constrained acquiescence—and those who argue against you, from the antient usage and custom of this kingdom, are answered that prescription cannot alter the eternal laws of justice, nor precedent give to falsehood the complexion of truth.—But the grand argument of both parties is the *partial injury* of some towns in England, on the one hand; the *absolute ruin* of your country, on the other.

Among so many discordant sentiments how are we to determine? I must, before I attempt a parallel, observe, that it
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is an established maxim of law, and (what is more to my purpose) of reason, that one disinterested and intelligent evidence is of more credibility than numbers whose minds are clouded by self-love, or blinded by ignorance.—Now, it is certain, that those people who take the liberty of reviling you and your measures, are either those whose interest it is that your oppression should continue—or who, from their total ignorance of your misery and distress, are inclined to believe your attempts to do yourselves justice are more the effects of malevolence towards this country (already humbled and depressed) than of your own real necessities—while, on the contrary, every man who is acquainted with your misery, and who has no interest in the event of the contest, is warm in your defence, and exclaims, with all the energy of truth, “that your sufferings, though unmerited, are great—that your conduct, though resolute and spirited, is yet loyal and necessary.”

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For my part, the injurious accusation of cowardice and treachery seems to me very inapplicable to your present situation——If you had seized the opportunity which now offers itself to oppress your neighbour, and to wrest from her any right which she in herself enjoys, the charge might have some foundation---but you do not wish to intrude on *her advantages*; you only demand the free use of *your own*: you are not armed to *invade her*, but to *defend yourselves*—You have been informed by your representatives in Parliament, that nothing but a free trade can save you from destruction; and you have in obedience to the prime law of nature, taken measures for your own preservation.

In accusing you of dishonour, men seem to have forgotten, that honour, tho' between private persons it must ever sway with irresistible authority, can never be a criterion

criterion between the claims of contending nations. In private life, the misfortune of an individual hurts only himself; and it is his duty to sacrifice even his life to his honour: but, to a nation, liberty and importance are not only as existence to the human frame, but as reputation and virtue itself. To part with those would be to deserve to lose them; and not to seek for them when lost, would be to prefer disgrace and infamy.—I should be glad to ask the men, who dwell on this argument, which of them, calumniated by the malice of a villain, and compelled to retire at a distance from the contempt of his acquaintance, would not, if he should find the character of his enemy discovered and made public, return among his friends, and, pointing out the fallacy of the charge he was condemned on, again demand their favour and society. Is this conduct dis-honourable?—As much so as your efforts to regain that dignity and consequence
which

which you have hitherto been deprived of by the power of your neighbours.

But, alas! the jarring pretensions of separate states are not easily determined. The orator and the statesman come into the field armed with tropes and statutes, and, having exhausted their quivers, they frequently leave to the rude logic of the soldier and his bayonet, what the force of eloquence and learning has not been able to decide.

The writer of these thoughts, removed to a distance where your poverty can never stare him in the face, nor your prosperity add to his interest, has no other motive for his labours but justice and reason.— He commits you to the care of Providence—as your intentions are just, you will, no doubt, meet with his favour; and hopes a glorious success may crown your national request. G DE 58

F I N I S.